



TOWN OF RIDGEFIELD
Office of the First Selectman

February 6, 2009

Public Health Committee

House Bill #6200

**AN ACT CONCERNING THE USE OF LONG-TERM ANTIBIOTICS FOR THE
TREATMENT OF LYME DISEASE**

RUDY MARCONI: Good afternoon, Madam Chair. Thank you for this opportunity. My name is Rudy Marconi and I am the First Selectman of the Town of Ridgefield. I am speaking in support of Bill 6200.

The residents of Ridgefield who I represent are acutely aware that the controversies surrounding Lyme Disease diagnosis and treatment put them at risk. I feel confident saying that most of our citizens know of a friend, neighbor or family member who has been severely affected by tick-borne illnesses. We are talking about individuals who have lost their ability to work, children who are out of school, and seniors who can no longer live alone. Some were diagnosed late; others appear not to have recovered despite treatment. The reasons why they are unable to resume a normal life are still a mystery to medical science. What is clear to the average Connecticut resident is that many people they know are being severely affected by an illness that is supposedly easy to detect and easy to cure.

Ridgefield has taken many measures to ensure the safety of its citizens in regard to tick-borne diseases over the past six years. Frankly, I believe we have done everything a community can do including forming a Task Force to address the problem, coordinating prevention seminars, sponsoring a Support Group through the VNA, and developing the BLAST health promotion effort to facilitate prevention education and early symptom awareness throughout Fairfield County. We have taken tick-borne diseases seriously and still our residents are suffering. Some drive long distances to find specialists, deplete their savings and lose jobs and homes in the process of trying to regain their health.

During my tenure as First Selectman, I have had many opportunities to work with our local hospital and physicians in collaborative health promotion and fundraising efforts. At present, I am actively involved in trying to resolve community concerns

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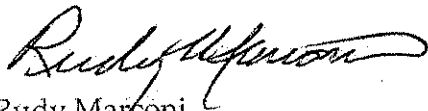
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regarding the level of care patients afflicted with tick-borne diseases are receiving. The recent formation of a ten-town HVCEO Lyme Disease Task Force is a step in the right direction.

I encourage our Department of Public Health to place a priority on tick-borne disease research and prevention.

I ask our governor to support statewide efforts to eradicate tick-borne diseases.

And today, I am asking our Public Health Committee to recognize the rights of patients to be informed that multiple standards of care exist and choices are available in Lyme disease treatment. That said, I believe it is imperative that doctors be allowed to make decisions based on their best judgment and years of clinical experience. It is not in the best interest of Connecticut residents for physicians to be hindered by guidelines or the fear of recrimination.



Rudy Marconi
First Selectman
Town of Ridgefield